

Girl Scout Troop #1963 Participants at the Corhaven Graveyard Project

www.corhavengraveyard.org

On May 6, 2017, our Brownie troop (3rd graders) participated in an educational experience at the Corhaven Graveyard in Quicksburg, VA (Shenandoah County). This graveyard was recently discovered by the owners shortly after moving to this area and held a dedication last April. The slave graveyard had been abandoned for over 100 years, and dates back to the mid-1800s. Through research and observation, it was discovered that 24 men, women, and a child had been buried on this land. Only a few graves are marked by rocks, none of which have names or dates. Volunteers had cleared the land, built a fence and walkway, placed benches and made a garden area. Our troop purchased plantings and helped plant to make a monarch way station, and recently made a donation to buy a sign through service project troop funds for the garden.

The 1.5-hour program created and given by Sarah Kohrs, the director of the Corhaven Graveyard, included a walk through the graveyard where the scouts became clue finders to gather information on what they observed. They learned about slavery in this area and discussed topics such as "how do we know people are buried here?"; "how is this different from other cemeteries you may have seen?"; and "how do we know who is buried here?" The girls engaged with photocopies of historic documents that tell the story of Corhaven and learned about the process of trying to identify those persons that were buried here. At this time, one person's name has been identified. Each person placed a stone on the cairn sculpture as a way to say, "I care about this place and about being intentional in peace-building in my own life." Ms. Kohrs taught about the basic life cycle of butterflies, the importance of monarch way stations, the basic parts of a plant and what they need to survive. Being that butterflies are a symbol of hope, it was very fitting that one be built at the grave yard. The girls worked directly with several Shenandoah master gardeners to plant the monarch waystation and also planted native trees in the grave yard. After the program, the scouts and their families camped down river on the Corhaven property.

Washington Post article on the graveyard: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/house-divided/wp/2016/05/02/long-lost-slave-cemetery-discovered-and-preserved-in-rural-virginia/?utm_term=.05ea0b2506b4



Troop receives instruction to begin gardening. Monarch waystation is being installed on the right side. The graveyard is in the fenced area beyond the open gate door.

Thank You Letter from Sarah Kohrs:

*"Dear Falls Church Girl Scout Troop,
Thank you so much for the donation to cover expenses for the plants and signage materials in Corhaven Graveyard Monarch Garden. This symbol of hope will easily inspire every person that visits this sacred space. And, as you each grow, this place will grow too, in reminding the community of the great good one person/one place can make in the world. Thank you, too, for the framed picture. They are treasured.*

*Yours in peace,
Sarah Kohrs
Director of Corhaven Graveyard"*



Sarah Kohrs (top left) with the Shenendoah Master Gardeners and Girl Scout Troop #1963. The Corhaven Graveyard is behind the group, the monarch waystation is on the front left (not able to be captured in photo).



Dedication stone at the Corhaven Graveyard.



Visitors may place a stone at the cairn sculpture.



Troop #1963 holds a bake sale in Falls Church, VA to help raise money for service projects, to include funds for building a sign for the Corhaven Graveyard.



The group learns about how the graveyard was discovered. They are in the graveyard area. Very few of the graveyards have a stone marker.



The group learns about a small child that was buried at this grave that was not marked by a stone, but by a grapevine.



The troop and their families enjoy an evening of camping on the Corhaven property.